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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/022,887	12/18/2001	Gerardo Molina	CMI-428	6419
23720	7590	06/10/2004	EXAMINER	
WILLIAMS, MORGAN & AMERSON, P.C. 10333 RICHMOND, SUITE 1100 HOUSTON, TX 77042			LANDREM, KAMRIN R	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3738	

DATE MAILED: 06/10/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	Application No. 10/022,887	Applicant(s) MOLINA, GERARDO	
	Examiner Kamrin R. Landrem	Art Unit 3738	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

### Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 26 February 2004.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**.      2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-16 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 1-6 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 7-16 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

### Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All    b) ☐ Some \*    c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

### Attachment(s)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)                        | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)                     |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)    | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____  |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____   | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                                    |

## DETAILED ACTION

### *Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103*

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 7-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Vallana et al (USPN 5,387,247) in view of Luthra et al (USPN 5,294,489).

Vallana discloses a prosthetic heart valve and method of coating a prosthetic heart valve comprising an annular body 6 defining a central orifice, the prosthetic device being coated with a graphite or pyrolytic carbon coating (3:45-50). Although not specifically recited by Vallana, it is well known that heart valves contain pivoting leaflets and sewing rings. Vallana discloses the heart valve as claimed however Vallana fails to disclose multiple layers of pyrolytic carbon, some of which contain graphite. Luthra et al teaches a coating process in which a plurality of segments (4:43-53) of carbide fibers (3:29-52) having specific length are coated with inner and out layers of pyrolytic carbide (12:39-44) to in order to produce a protective coating. Luthra does not specifically recite graphite fibers however it is well know that graphite is a carbon form. Therefore in view of the teachings it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the prosthetic coating disclosed by Vallana to consist of an inner layer of pyrolytic carbon, a middle layer of graphite fibers and an outer layer of pyrolytic carbon fibers in order to produce a prosthetic device with a protective coating and a reinforced central layer for additional strength.

***Response to Arguments***

Applicant's arguments filed 2/26/04 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. In response to applicant's argument that there is no suggestion to combine the references, the examiner recognizes that obviousness can only be established by combining or modifying the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention where there is some teaching, suggestion, or motivation to do so found either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art. See *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 USPQ2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988) and *In re Jones*, 958 F.2d 347, 21 USPQ2d 1941 (Fed. Cir. 1992). In this case, the motivation to combine was disclosed by the Examiner in Paper No. 7. The motivation to combine was supported by Luthra's teaching of a protective covering. The protective coating taught by Luthra has a higher tolerance to imperfections and improves the strength and toughness of the composite (4:7-12). It would be obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to apply a coating/covering to a prosthetic to protect the device from the biological environment into which it is implanted.

In response to applicant's argument that combining Luthra and Vallana would be to coat Dacron or Teflon cloth with the a-b-c structure of Luthra, the fact that applicant has recognized another advantage which would flow naturally from following the suggestion of the prior art cannot be the basis for patentability when the differences would otherwise be obvious. See *Ex parte Obiaya*, 227 USPQ 58, 60 (Bd. Pat. App. & Inter. 1985). Vallana discloses an annular body with a central orifice and a first layer of carbon coating. The examiner combined

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Vallana with the teaching of Luthra to produce an annular valve body with the multiple layers as claimed to produce a prosthetic with a protective coating and improved strength and toughness. The applicant's arguments that concerning the annular body itself and the layer it comprises is unpersuasive because the claims are silent to the manner in which the layers are applied to the "annular body having a first, second and third layer" and therefore the layers *could* be wrapped about the annular valve body.

### ***Conclusion***

**THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Kamrin R. Landrem whose telephone number is 703-305-8061. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:00-5:00, Monday-Friday.


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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Corrine McDermott can be reached on 703-308-2111. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Kamrin Landrem  
Examiner  
AU 3738

krl

  
**CORRINE McDERMOTT**  
**SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER**  
**TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3700**